

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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DEPT PASS AID

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: SPOPT OCI EG
SUBJECT: POPULATION EXPLOSION

REF: CAIRO 11354
SUMMARY. AHRAM AND AKHBAR APRIL 24 HAVE TWO EDITORIALS WHICH LINK DEALING WITH POPULATION EXPLOSION TO BRINGING NEW LAND UNDER CULTIVATION. CONSPICUOUSLY ABSENT IS EDITORIAL MENTION OF "NATIONWIDE PROGRAM TO LIMIT INCREASE IN POPULATION RATES" ADVOCATED IN AHRAM EDITORIAL LAST WEEK, ALTHOUGH AHRAM APRIL 23 REPORT ON SADAT'S CALL FOR POPULATION REDISTRIBUTION MENTIONS PLANNING SO POPULATION DOES NOT EXCEED 56 MILLION BY YEAR 2000. EDITORIALS TODAY APPARENTLY BALANCING AHRAM'S PREVIOUS STRESS ON POLITICALLY SENSITIVE ISSUE OF BIRTH CONTROL. VIEWS THAT POPULATION EXPLOSION CAN BE HANDLED BY EXPANDED CULTIVATION IS ALSO VIEW OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENT. END SUMMARY.

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PAGE 02 CAIRO 11493 250909Z

1. AHRAM AND AKHBAR EDITORIALS TODAY SEEM TO PULL BACK FROM POSITION OF AHRAM APRIL 21 EDITORIAL (REFTEL) WHICH CALLED FOR "NATIONWIDE PROGRAM TO LIMIT INCREASE IN POPULATION RATES BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE." EDITORIALS SAY POPULATION EXPLOSION SERIOUS PROBLEM WHICH MUST BE MET WITH "DECISIVE ACTION", BUT ADVOCATE BRINGING UNDER CULTIVATION VAST EXPANSES OF DESERT. AHRAM

STATES THAT CONCENTRATION OF POPULATION IN RELATIVELY SMALL AREA MORE DANGEROUS THAN POPULATION INCREASE. QUICK ACTION NEEDED FOR EGYPT TO BREAK OUT OF THE "LIMITED CIRCLE" IN WHICH SHE LIVES AND TO CREATE NEW AREAS THROUGH RECLAMATION AND CONSTRUCTION.

2. EDITORIALS REFERRED TO SADAT STATEMENTS REPORTED IN FRONT-PAGE STORY APRIL 23 AHAM. SADAT CALLED FOR NATIONAL PROGRAM TO "REDISTRIBUTE DENSE POPULATION" OF OLD VALLEY INTO NEW AREAS. WHILE STORY HEAVILY EMPHASIZED REDISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION, THE IDEA OF POPULATION LIMITATION IS BRIEFLY MENTIONED. SADAT REPORTEDLY REVIEWED DETAILED STUDY OF UPWARD TREND OF POPULATION SUPPOSED TO REACH 65 MILLION BY YEAR 2000. ARTICLE MENTIONS PLANNING THE INCREASE IN POPULATION IN ORDER THAT IT NOT EXCEED 56 MILLION IN YEAR 2000.

3. COMMENT: BOTH EDITORIALS REFLECT ATTITUDES MORE IN LINE WITH GOE POLICY OF DEALING WITH POPULATION INCREASE THROUGH EXPANSION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND RATHER THAN BY ACTIVE PURSUIT OF POLITICALLY SENSITIVE BIRTH CONTROL. TODAY'S EDITORIALS, BESIDES REINFORCING PRESIDENT'S REMARKS, SEEM DESIGNED TO BALANCE AHAM'S PREVIOUS STRESS ON BIRTH CONTROL AND HEAD OFF ANY UNSETTLING POLITICAL FALLOUT. IF AHAM PURPOSE WAS TO TEST WATERS ON BIRTH CONTROL REACTION HAS SHOWN GOVT NOT INTER-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 CAIRO 11493 250909Z

ESTED IN GOING TOO FAR TOO FAST. VIEW THAT POPULATION PROBLEM CAN BE MANAGED WITH EXPANSION INTO DESERT LANDS IS ALSO VIEW SHARED BY ISLAMIC ESTABLISHMENT LED BY SHEIKH OF AL AZHAR ABDUL HALIM MAHMUD. EILTS

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